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Christmas Dings

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BAKER, Hamilton Place, Boston, Mass.

Christmas Doings

A Group of Little Christmas Plays,
Entertainments and Recitations

By
LETTIE C. VAN DERVEER

NOTICE

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BOSTON
WALTER H. BAKER & CO.

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Christmas Doings

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CHRISTMAS PLAYS

The Lonely Little Evergreen Tree

The theme of this little play is a white "gift" Christmas. On the Sunday preceding the entertainment of the Sunday School have children stationed at the church doors as the congregation are leaving, giving to each person a little card bearing the following lines:

Won't you bring a little gift
All wrapped in white,
To help Old Santa help the poor
Next night!

These gifts are to be collected at the doors on the night of the entertainment and go with those that the Snow Sprites leave at the foot of the tree, to be given later to poor people.

CHARACTERS

SANTA CLAUS. In usual red, fur-trimmed out-of-doors costume; carries big bag, not very well filled.

SNOW SPRITES. Any number of little boys and girls, dressed in white from head to foot (pattern of clown suits; pointed caps). They sparkle with tinsel and Christmas-tree snow.

UNSEEN VOICES (*little tree and choruses*). Other children hidden from view of audience, tree voice back of tree if possible.

SCENE.—*Stage floor covered with white to represent snow; dark curtain at back, or preferably, bank of laurel. As curtain is drawn, one tree, about six feet in height, is shown at centre of stage, slightly back.*

TREE VOICE (*chanting*).

I'm a lonely, lonely, lonely little evergreen tree,
And there doesn't seem to be
Any place for me.

For the big, big church I am far too small;
For the little brown house I am much too tall;
And there doesn't seem to be
Any place at all

For a lonely, lonely, lonely little evergreen tree.

UNSEEN CHORUS.

It's a lonely, lonely, lonely little evergreen tree,
And there doesn't seem to be
Any place for it you see;

For the big, big church it is far too small;
For the little brown house it is much too tall;

And there doesn't seem to be
Any place at all
For this lonely, lonely, lonely little evergreen tree.

(SNOW SPRITES *trip in, carrying white baskets containing bits of cotton and sparkling tinsel.*)

SNOW SPRITES.

Heigho! Heigho, there's work for us to-night!
Everything around here has got to be white.
For Christmas is coming! It's very nearly due.
So get to work, Brothers, or we shan't get
through!

(*They toss the bits of snow and tinsel on little tree and all about; moving softly and swiftly back and forth. Then the sound of approaching sleigh-bells is heard, and the SPRITES pause in listening attitudes, hand at ear; then say more softly as they gradually disappear.*)

Heigho! Heigho! there! Don't you hear those
bells?

Santa Claus is coming! their ting-aling-ling! tells.
Hide, little Brothers, until he passes through!
We mustn't hinder Santa Claus, he has so much
to do.

(*A voice is heard as SPRITES scamper away.*)

Whoa-o-o-a!

(SANTA comes in view.)

SANTA CLAUS (*sings to tune "Reuben I Have Long Been Thinking"*).

Dear! Oh dear! I've long been thinking
This world would be sad enough
If I should—and now it's happened,—
Should run out of Christmas stuff!

UNSEEN CHORUS.

Trouble-lubble-loo!
Awful trouble!
Trouble-lubble-loo!
Trouble enough!
Here old-dear old-kind old Santa
Has run out of Christmas stuff!

SANTA CLAUS.

Dolls and Teddy-bears grow scarcer,
Horns and drums come awful high;
Picture books and skates and puzzles
All your life is worth to buy.

UNSEEN CHORUS (*repeats*).

Trouble-lubble-loo, etc.

SANTA CLAUS.

Most run out of nuts and raisins;
Candy canes are pretty low;
Orange basket's almost empty;
And I've many miles to go.

(UNSEEN CHORUS *repeats*.)

SANTA CLAUS.

Got some little children waiting
On the last round that I go,
Awful poor! They need me special,
Hate to disappoint them so.

(UNSEEN CHORUS *repeats.*)

SANTA CLAUS (*sees tree*).

Ah! a little tree! I have it!
Lots of people pass this way.
I will hang a sign upon it;
Let me see,—what shall I say?—

(*Scratches head thoughtfully while chorus sings.*)

(SANTA CLAUS *takes large piece of cardboard out of bag. It is already lettered in large print, but SANTA goes through the motions of printing it; then turns it toward audience and hangs it on tree. Sings words that are on sign.*)

Wanted—help! to fill up stockings.
Leave some presents by this tree.
I will stop a little later
Dearest people, don't fail me.
(*Signed*) SANTA CLAUS.

UNSEEN CHORUS (*joyfully*).

Trouble-lubble-loo!
Good-bye trouble!

Trouble-lubble-loo!
You can't stay;
Santa Claus won't fail the children;
Santa Claus has found a way!

SANTA CLAUS (*sings as he moves off stage*).
Hi! there! Ho! there! Dasher! Dancer!
Donder! Blitzen! shake your hoofs!
Got to do a lot of prancin'
Cross an awful lot of roofs!

(UNSEEN CHORUS, *as before, joyfully.*)

(*As sound of sleigh-bells grows fainter in distance* SPRITES *steal softly from hiding places.*)

SNOW SPRITES.
Heigho! Heigho, there! Snow Sprites, did you
hear?
Extra work for us to do, to hunt up Christmas
cheer!
We'll tap! tap! at the windows of all the folks
we know,
And tell them Santa needs their help; come on
now we must go!

(SPRITES *disappear.*)

VOICE OF LITTLE TREE.
I am going to be a busy little evergreen tree;
For old Santa Claus has found
Some lovely work for me;

To help to gather gifts I am not too small;
Nor to keep them till he comes I am not too tall;
 And I'm going to help to make
 The children happy, all;
I am going to be a busy little evergreen tree.

UNSEEN CHORUS.

It is going to be a busy little evergreen tree;
 For old Santa Claus has found
 Some work for it you see;
To help gather gifts it is not too small;
Nor to keep them till he comes it is not too tall;
 And it's going to help to make
 The children happy, all;
It is going to be a busy little evergreen tree!

SNOW SPRITES (*return with baskets overflowing with white-covered gifts of all sizes. Some they place at foot of tree; some they toss on its branches, chanting*).

Heigho! Heigho, there! who'd ever think to see
Outdoors,—and full of presents,—a little Christmas tree!

Our Santa Claus has blessed you by finding work
of cheer;
And you are helping, Little Tree, a great big lot
this year.

(*Sleigh-bells are again heard, and SPRITES scuttle away into nooks and corners as SANTA'S "Who-o-oo!" is heard, and he comes into sight.*)

SANTA (*shows joy at sight of little tree, sings*).

Hi! there! Ho! there! I just knew it!

Couldn't fail because you see
Christmas hearts are full of giving.

(*Lifts hands over tree as if in blessing.*)

Bless you, little Christmas tree!

UNSEEN CHORUS (*softly and joyously*).

Trouble-lubble-loo!

Good-bye trouble!

Trouble-lubble-loo!

You can't stay;

Santa Claus won't fail the children!

Santa Claus has found a way!

TREE VOICE.

I'm a happy, happy, happy little Christmas Tree!

For the blessed work of giving

Is the work for me!

For the big, big church I may be too small,

For the little brown house I may be too tall;

But in memory of the greatest

Christmas gift of all

I'm a happy, happy, happy little Christmas Tree!

(SANTA CLAUS *is filling his bag*; SNOW SPRITES *steal softly from hiding places as* LITTLE TREE *chants. All form semi-circle, tree in centre as they join* UNSEEN CHORUS *in chanting.*)

It's a happy, happy, happy little Christmas tree,
For the blessed work of giving
Is the work for it you see;
For the big, big church it may be too small;
For the little brown house it may be too tall;
But in memory of the greatest
Christmas Gift of all
It's a happy, happy, happy little Christmas tree!

CURTAIN

Mixed Baskets

CHARACTERS

MRS. JOYCE.

JOE and LUCILE JOYCE, *her children.*

OLD MRS. NIXON, *a seamstress.*

ACT I

SCENE.—*Sitting-room of the JOYCE home. Old MRS. NIXON gathering up sewing materials into faded bag. Her gray hair (wig or powdered) unbecomingly drawn back into ugly knot. Clothes old-fashioned and rusty black.*

MRS. NIXON (*talking to self*). Funny, what's become of my scissors! I s'pose one of them young ones has had them—(*sees them on floor under chair*). Oh! here they are, for a wonder. Now, where's my tape-measure? Queer how everything walks off in this house! (*Finds it hung about neck.*) Humph! Well, it's a good thing I did have it on me or land knows where

it would be. Where is my needle book? Beats all how I can't keep track of a thing ——! (*Discovers it pinned on front of her waist.*) Well, it's a mighty good thing I can pin a few things fast to me. Maybe now if nobody around here has wanted to use the *rest* of my things I can get ready to go home.

(*Picks up large gray shawl from chair; throws it over head and shoulders, fastening at throat. MRS. JOYCE enters room, open purse in hand.*)

MRS. JOYCE (*in cheerful voice*). Well, Mrs. Nixon, I see you are getting ready to go. I guess you are tired too after all the nice sewing you have done.

MRS. NIXON (*sourly*). Don't know as it's so nice, but I guess it'll *hold* anyway.

MRS. JOYCE. I think it looks very nice, and I'm sure it will hold. And here is a little extra for Christmas. (*Holds out money.*)

MRS. NIXON. Thanky, Mrs. Joyce, but I don't feel to take what I ain't earned.

MRS. JOYCE. Oh! but you have. I'm sure you often take extra stitches for us. (*Presses money into MRS. NIXON'S hand. MRS. NIXON moves toward door.*) I wish you a merry Christmas, Mrs. Nixon.

MRS. NIXON (*grimly*). Well, it's more than I expect to *have*. Good-bye!

(MRS. JOYCE looks after her, shaking head slowly.)

MRS. JOYCE (*compassionately*). Poor old soul!

(JOE and LUCILE enter room laughing and talking; fling down school books.)

LUCILE. Oh, Mother, isn't Mrs. Nixon too cross for anything? We saw her just now and called "Merry Christmas!" to her, and she said not to count chickens before they hatched, that it might be anything but merry by this time to-morrow.

JOE. I wanted to holler: "Cheer up, the worst is yet to come!" but I didn't this time, Mother.

MRS. JOYCE. I'm glad of that, Son. Remember she is old and lonely. Which reminds me,—I want you and Lucile to take a basket to her and one to Miss Sally this afternoon.

JOE. Aw, say, Mother, why didn't you let Mrs. Nixon tote her own basket? Cross old bear!

LUCILE. Miss Sally is different. It's a pleasure to do anything for her.

MRS. JOYCE. Well, dears, I guess it won't hurt you much to "tote" both of them. And of course I wouldn't expect Mrs. Nixon to carry hers home when I've four young arms to call upon. I'll get them now, and if you'd rather you may just leave them at the door; ring the bell and scamper. (*Goes for baskets.*)

LUCILE. Well! I surely would rather with the one for Mrs. Nixon.

JOE. And let's do it with Miss Sally's too. It is more of a surprise just to find the basket, and no folks waiting around for their thanks.

(MRS. JOYCE *returns carrying two large handle baskets exactly alike; each covered with a white cloth; sprays of holly lying on both; a much larger and prettier spray on one than on the other.*)

MRS. JOYCE. Here they are. The one for Mrs. Nixon is nearly all food, but our Miss Sally's is quite different, as you know. It is this one with the larger spray of holly.

LUCILE. The dear! I'm going to run up there to-morrow and get her to put on that lovely lavender kimono and darling cap with the rosettes that Grandma made. And do you think she'll like the slippers from me, Mother?

MRS. JOYCE. I know she will, dear.

JOE. And do you s'pose she'll guess that I carved out and painted the rings for her knitting bag?

MRS. JOYCE. If she doesn't guess I'll let her know it, Joey. To her that will be a great part of the pleasure of owning it.

LUCILE. And did you put in some of your special marmalade, Mother?

MRS. JOYCE. Yes, and a box of Aunt May's delicious candies, and that lovely illustrated book

of old songs that I got in the city. Well, run along, my young Santa Clauses, before the darkness catches you. (*She goes out first.*)

(*Children draw on mittens, talking; baskets at their feet.*)

LUCILE. Mother certainly is good to folks, isn't she?

JOE. Yes, and Miss Sally'll appreciate it. But in Mrs. Nixon's case I think she's casting her pearls before swine.

LUCILE (*shocked*). Oh, Joe! What a dreadful thing to call a lady!

JOE. Now, Lu, I wasn't calling her it,—I was just speaking figgeratively. But honest to goodness, she is awful mean. A feller don't feel like luggin' baskets of good stuff to anybody that wouldn't let him get his ball when it lit on her shed roof.—

LUCILE. And she won't let us girls even have the flowers that are on the *outside* of her fence.—

JOE. And when us fellers was rollin' a big snowball in front of her house—*swoop!* she comes with her broom and sends it all to flinders! (*In showing how she did it JOE accidentally sweeps the holly off of both baskets. LUCILE exclaims in dismay. JOE gathers it up.*) Oh, no harm done. This is Miss Sally's, don't you remember——? Sure, it was right here by my feet. (*Places large bunch on basket at his feet*

which happens to be the wrong one. Picks up basket.) Well, I s'pose we may as well go and get it over. We'll leave Mrs. Nixon's first—and then Miss Sally's.

LUCILE (*picking up other basket as they go out*). And we'll ring the door-bells and then run!

CURTAIN

ACT II

SCENE.—Same as ACT I with addition of trimmed Christmas tree and presents lying about among tissue paper, ribbon and string. Time, Christmas morning. LUCILE curled in big chair looking at new book; JOE on floor examining skates. MRS. JOYCE enters room opening small envelope.

MRS. JOYCE. Miss Sally is surely prompt with her "thank you." Here it is only Christmas morning and she just sent this little note by Old Eli.

LUCILE (*marking place in book with her finger*). Oh, what does she say, Mother? Didn't she just love her kimono?

MRS. JOYCE (*reads*). "Dear Joyce joy-givers: Such a wonderful basket did I find on my doorstep Christmas Eve! And it isn't a bit hard to guess from whence it came. You clever folks! How did you guess that my faithful old Hannah is laid up with neuralgia, and the pantry shelves in consequence almost bare? (MRS. JOYCE *looks puzzled as she reads on slowly.*) So when I lifted off the beautiful holly and white coverings and looked upon all the good things within my mouth began to water in expectation."

LUCILE. But she can't *eat* a kimono!

JOE. And the paint on those rings will give her colic!

MRS. JOYCE (*continues*). "And I called to Hannah: 'Hannah, Hannah! The day is saved!' And she said she wanted the wish-bone to see if she couldn't wish away the hoo-doo that had got into her jaw."

LUCILE. Wish-bone!

JOE. Wish-bone!

(*They look at each other in questioning dismay.*)

MRS. JOYCE. Dear me! I'm afraid Miss Sally isn't well herself. This doesn't sound rational. (*Reads on.*) "Hannah says that basket has put new life in her, and she immediately got the oven piping hot ready for our beautiful plump chicken."

JOE. Chicken? Why, I thought she always had turkey for Christmas.

MRS. JOYCE (*reads on*). "And I've turned out the cranberry jelly into my old English cutglass bowl, and the celery looks like a pale green bouquet on the table. And Grandmother Hayden's old blue plate is graced by the prettiest mince pie heart could desire." (*Stops reading to remark.*) I never knew Miss Sally to go on at such length about things they have to eat.

LUCILE. And not a word about how the kimono looks or the slippers fit.

JOE (*joking*). It must be the rosettes on that cap went to her head.

LUCILE (*laughing*). Joe, you're a silly goose.

MRS. JOYCE (*reading*). "Well, dear folks, I just cannot thank you enough. Never did Christmas gifts fill a greater need, and tell those dear children I know they each had a hand in it. Good-bye, and a beautiful Christmas for you all, is the wish of your old friend, Sally Hayden Montgomery." (MRS. JOYCE *thoughtfully folds note.*) Well, I certainly never knew Miss Sally to write such a disjointed note as this. It seems as if there must be some mistake. (*Suddenly.*) Are you sure you didn't mix those baskets?

LUCILE. Why, Mother, we took her the one with that big full bunch of holly on top just as you said — (*Pauses; looks at JOE.*) Joe, are you sure you put the right holly back when you knocked it off that time?

JOE (*worried*). Why, I—yes I—I guess I did,—I thought I did——

MRS. JOYCE. Oh dear! I just feel it in my bones you mixed them,—and Miss Sally got all the food.

LUCILE (*almost crying*). And cross old Mrs. Nixon all our lovely presents!

MRS. JOYCE. Hark! there's the door-bell. (*Calls.*) We're in the sitting-room, May, if it's any of the neighbors. (*To children.*) Well, don't let it spoil your Christmas, children. We'll try to straighten it out later.—Oh! (*Turning toward door in surprise.*) Come in, Mrs. Nixon.

(*Old MRS. NIXON enters; shawl over head as before, and so arranged as to cover her completely. MRS. JOYCE and children look at her anxiously.*)

MRS. NIXON. Well! I've lived to see seventy Christmases, and I donno as I ever have been more surprised on one of 'em as this one. (*JOYCE family look at each other.*) When I opened that basket I just couldn't believe my eyes! Brother Joe's folks sends me things to eat every year, and Cousin Rachel an order for coal; but never a one of 'em seems to think that eatin' and heatin' ain't everything. (*Wipes a tear.*) And so when I seen them pretty things and knowed there was somebody that understood that even a crabbed old woman likes nice things—why I—I just bust right out cryin' for

joy. (*Wipes more tears.*) I been lookin' in the glass at an ugly cross old woman for so long I forgot she could look different, but she's a-goin' to after this. I slipped on that kimono over my dress, an' that sweet little be-ribboned cap on my head, and fluffed out my hair, and I looked so different I says to myself: "Jane Nixon, ain't you ashamed to be so old and ugly when you can be real youngish and pretty for the tryin'!" And then I took that singin'-book into the parlor and lit the lamp and opened up my old melodeon and there I set, Mrs. Joyce, singin' them songs I used to love so till I could seem to feel my folks standin' around joinin' in just like they used to. And after I'd sung clean to page forty-two I just naturally hadn't as much voice left as a chippy-bird. So then I eat candy for a spell till I happened to see the face of my old clock which was sayin' plain as could be: "Jane Nixon, how do you expect to keep young and charmin' if you lose your beauty sleep like this?" Well, after breakfast this morning I got all fixed up again and I linked that beautiful sewin'-bag over my arm—I ain't had nothin' but an old faded one for years,—and I stuck a piece of that meltin' good candy in my mouth, an' tucked them lavender slippers in my bag,—wait. (*Turns her back to them, slips off arctics quickly, puts on slippers; turns around again.*) And here I be! (*Throws off shawl and stands revealed and transformed; white hair fluffed out beneath lacy cap;*

kimono becomingly fastened; knitting bag over arm. Others group about her pleased and surprised.) And I feel all different just knowin' somebody understands. And I'm goin' to try to carry this Merry Christmas with me all the rest of my life.

MRS. JOYCE. Dear Mrs. Nixon, we're so glad! I think God helped us get that basket to you (*children nod emphatically*), since it makes you so happy. And we'd love to have you take dinner with us, wouldn't we, children?

CHILDREN (*heartily*). Yes indeed! do stay, Mrs. Nixon —

LUCILE. And please keep on those things a while, you look so sweet in them!

MRS. NIXON. Well, I will, thank you, if you're sure I ain't intrudin'. (*Happily.*) Now ain't this just a real old-fashioned Merry Christmas!

CURTAIN

How Christmas Came to the Orphans' Home

Play in two acts. Color scheme red and green.
Twenty-two characters; ten boys and twelve girls.

ACT I

SCENE.—*Interior of a living-room; fireplace in centre; armchair; rug; pictures on wall. Darkness except for firelight; little girl in white, JESSICA, seated in armchair beside the fire.*

NOTE.—A fireplace may be constructed easily from a large and small packing box, and some red cambric chalked with white to represent bricks. The firelight effect may be gotten either by the use of lighted candles back of piled-up sticks of wood, or electric drop-lights similarly concealed from audience.

JESSICA (*speaks*).

It's the night before Christmas
And so many are glad,
I just hate to think
There is anyone sad.
But I've heard there are children
Who haven't nice homes;
So the joy of blest Christmas
To them never comes.
So I've asked Lew and Molly
And Charlie and Bess,
And Daisy and Dolly,
And all of the rest,
To come here to-night
And we'll talk it all over;
And see if there isn't
Some way to discover
How we can do something
For someone who misses
The gladness of Christmas,
And all of its blisses.

(*Jumps up exclaiming—"Here they come!"*
as the sound of sleigh-bells is heard, and a
chorus of children's voices coming nearer
and nearer, singing to the familiar tune,
"Jingle Bells.")

CHORUS.

Jingle bells! Jingle bells!
Jingle all the way!

Everywhere their music tells
To-morrow's Christmas Day-a-a-a!
Jingle bells! Jingle bells!
Now the ground is white;
Oh what fun to ride and sing
A sleighing song to-night!

(A man's voice calls, "Whoa!" and the bells cease, and nine boys and girls burst into the room, still humming the song; JESSICA rises as they come in; meets them. Girls wear long red capes, the hoods of which are over their heads. A border of white cotton to represent fur edges hoods and capes. Boys wear green coats and red caps bordered with cotton. Ordinary clothing may be worn if expense must be considered.)

JESSICA (*advancing to greet them*).
Heigho, Daisy! Heigho, Dolly!
Charlie, Lew, and Bess and Molly!
Everyone, I'm glad to see you;
Sit here by the fire with me, do.

(They group themselves on the arms of the chair, in it and on the hearth-rug. The boys toss off their caps, and girls throw back their capes revealing dainty dresses and be-ribboned hair.)

JESSICA (*continues*).
I've thought and I've pondered;
And wondered and wondered,

If there isn't something we children can do
To make Christmas glad, friends,
For those who are sad, friends;
What thoughts have you had, friends,
I'm depending on you!

(Children sit in various thoughtful attitudes, studying the firelight for a moment, silently, then begin a sort of chant, with rhythmic motions of their bodies.)

Firelight glimmer for us;
Night grows dimmer o'er us;
All we our thinking-caps put on!

(Tap their brows.)

Softly stealing o'er us
Kindly feelings; o'er us,
While we our thinking-caps put on.
And while we ponder
In the warm soft glow;
Our thoughts will wander as the snowflakes
blow,
Out to those sad ones
Whom we do not know;
While we are thinking-caps put on—

(A tap! tap! is heard at the door, and all turn their faces questioningly toward it, as two white-clad figures enter. Golden stars dot their flowing robes, which are caught in with ropes of tinsel, which also binds their

hair. They stand at either side of the fireplace in the half-light, and say softly, but clearly.)

We are Christmas angels;
Our names are Peace and Good-will.
We came to the earth long, long ago;
And we stay, for we're needed still.
So whenever a heart-voice calls us,
As yours, dear ones, called to-night
We hasten to bring an answer;
And a Star (*points reverently upward*) is
our guiding light.

We know you would bring glad tidings
Of cheer to some hearts forlorn;
And we'll show you where you are needed
To make a glad Christmas morn.
So slip on your fur-trimmed wrappings
(*Children, including JESSICA, do so*),
And come where we lead the way;
We'll bring you back safe and surely
To spend a glad Christmas Day.

(*Children, chanting as before, follow as the Christmas Spirits pass out of the room.*)

Star-light glimmer o'er us;
Night grows dimmer o'er us
While we with helping hand do go;
Christmas Spirits lead us;
Kindly feelings speed us,

So we with helping hand will go.
And while we wander o'er
The snow's soft glow;
Where over yonder hearts are sad we know,
Ministering children
In this world below,
All we with helping hand will go.

(The curtain falls as the last words reach the audience, chanted softly as from a distance.)

END OF ACT I

NOTE.—During the short intermission for change of scene, some one might play “Holy Night, Peaceful Night” softly on the violin.

ACT II

SCENE I.—*For this act the rug, chair, pictures and ornaments should be removed, leaving a bare room with only the fireplace and plain walls, to represent a room in an orphanage. Ten candles in simple candlesticks are on the mantelpiece. Curtain rises showing five little girls in severely plain, long night-dresses, hair*

parted and done in two tight little braids, all alike; and five little boys in equally plain night-drawers, hair plastered to heads, sitting in a straight row across front of stage. They are seated on little foot-stools, heads propped in their hands as they dolefully sing-song the following verse, looking down at the floor.

To-morrow will be Christmas Day;

Oh dear me!

And lots of folks are glad they say;

Oh dear me!

In homes where Mammias fond and true

And Papas, love their children too;

But no such homes for me and you,

(Shake heads dolefully looking at each other.)

Oh dear me!

(Raise heads and clasp hands around their knees.)

To-night is Christmas Eve you know,

Oh dear me!

In happy homes they love it so,

Oh dear me!

They hang their stockings in a row,

And Santa good and kind, you know,

Just crams them till they overflow;

Oh dear me!

(Look at each other excitedly as each unrolls a little stocking held in his lap.)

Suppose we hang our stockings so?
You and me;
Before Jane calls, "To bed you go!"
You and me.
And maybe someone good and kind,
Our row of stockings here will find,
And leave a toy or two behind.
Oh! dear! me!

(Last in joyful accents.)

*(They tiptoe to the fireplace and hang them
on nails in a row, then move back and gaze
at them in half-frightened awe.)*

A VOICE *(is heard calling)*.

To bed! to bed! you sleepy heads,
'T is very late you know.
Your candles light, and hold them right,
And march out in a row!

NOTE.—If the stage is large enough to arrange it, have a tree at either end and as the orphans chant their second verse, the other children, led by the Christmas Spirits, advance softly from either side, and form listening groups, hidden from the orphans by the trees, and at the words—

And maybe someone good and kind
Our row of stockings here will find,
they look at each other as if to say: "there, that's it!" and tiptoe hurriedly out of sight.

(The children start guiltily at the call and hurry to light their candles; the girls turn to the left; the boys to the right, starting from in front of the mantelpiece, and keeping step to the following words, march out of sight.)

Left! right! Good-night!
Stars bright! snow white!
Eyes tight till day-light.
Good-night! Good-night!

(Repeat.)

(As soon as the last one is gone the other children appear, coming around the trees at either side of the stage. Each carries a bag full of things which he and she drop at the front of the stage; turn, pointing to the stockings, and exclaim.)

There they are, see them!
Oh! Oh! Oh!
Their poor little stockings
All in a row!

(Then they open bags and reach into them, pulling out little red paper covered packages, and keeping in step hurry back to the fire-place, each one directing his attention to the stocking nearest in front of him. All say together as they push the red bags into the stockings.)

Put some raisins in the toe,

(Run lightly back returning with second parcel, and third, etc.)

And some candies in the heel;
A bag of nuts is next;
Sakes alive! How good they feel!

(Feel of lumpy stockings delightedly.)

This banana must go in;
And this nice red apple too;
Now there's not a bit of room
Only, Mr. Orange, for you!

(Then the girls alone return and kneeling place a doll beneath each of their stockings saying.)

Here are dollies for the girls:

(Then boys with drums.)

Here are drums for the boys;

GIRLS.

Won't they love their pretty curls!

BOYS.

Won't they make a jolly noise!

(All together, still kneeling by stockings.)

Isn't this the very nicest
Christmas Eve you ever knew?
I'm so glad we found out something
We for other folks could do.

Oh, I'm glad the Christmas Spirits
Peace and Good-will lead the way!
Oh, I'm glad, I'm glad for all things
'Specially for Christmas Day!

(They rise and backing toward either side of the stage raise warning fingers and tiptoe softly out. Keeping time with each step they say.)

Sh! Sh! Sh!

Be just as still as mice.

Sh! Sh! Sh!

Oh, don't it all look nice!

Sh! Sh! Sh!

I'd love to see their eyes!

Sh! Sh! Sh!

They'll be big with surprise!

Sh! Sh! Sh!

I wish that we could see 'em;

Sh! Sh! Sh!

I'd almost like to be 'em.

Sh! Sh! Sh!

But we must hurry! hurry!

Sh! Sh! Sh!

Or our dear folks will worry.

CURTAIN

Some appropriate Christmas music should be played while final scene is arranged.

SCENE II.—*Same room in orphanage; bare walls adorned with holly wreaths and festoons of green; lighted brightly to represent morning sunshine.*

TABLEAU.—One minute.

(Orphan girls and boys still in night clothes; hair tousled as if just out of bed; grouped about the fireplace; girls adoringly clasping dolls, or opening packages; boys in act of beating drums or exploring stockings. Two or three rubbing eyes sleepily. All looking excited and happy.)

CURTAIN

The Talented Dollies

For eight little girls.

DOLL SHOP WOMAN. *Taller girl dressed quaintly as old lady; wears cap and spectacles.*

BABETTE. *Her assistant, dressed as French peasant child; black velvet bodice; full blue skirt; white cap; hair in two braids.*

FRENCH DOLLS. *Six smaller girls; fluffy white dresses; colored sashes, and butterfly bows on hair; as doll-like as possible.*

SCENE.—*Doll shop; dolls of all kinds arranged in rows; tagged.*

DOLL SHOP WOMAN (*appears first; says*).

Does any one wish to buy dollies?

I've some wonderful ones in my shop.

(*Waves hand toward rows of dolls.*)

There's short ones, and tall ones;

There's large ones, and small ones;

And those that won't break if they drop.

And I've six of such elegant dollies!
That came here direct from Paree';
They will talk if you wind them,
And walk;—you will find them
As gifted as dollies can be.

I really must show you these dollies
(*Calls.*) Babette,—the French dollies; please
wind them!
And bring them in here
Very quickly, my dear;
And mind you keep watch right behind them!

(*A tap! tap! of footsteps is heard approaching, and dolls appear, stepping exactly together; one after the other; bodies stiff; each step jerky and mechanical. BABETTE follows. As first doll reaches farther side of platform BABETTE goes behind her, pretends to turn screw, and doll stops abruptly, facing audience. BABETTE repeats act to each in turn until they are in a row across platform; then hovers back of them. DOLL SHOP WOMAN stands at side front.*)

DOLL SHOP WOMAN (*to audience*).
The first one (*points*) is Violet Lily,
The second is Marie Louise,
Then Rose Arabella,
Eugenie and Stella;

And Beatrice Claire, if you please.

Babette, link their hands (BABETTE obeys)—
now they'll bow

To you when she pushes a spring.

(BABETTE pushes spring in first doll; dolls bow
from knees up, stiffly, in unison.)

Now friends, did you ever

See toys quite so clever?

These dolls can do most anything!

Now listen, and hear the dears talk!

Say "Papa" (*dolls in piping voices,*
"Papa") and "Mama" (*dolls*
"Mama") the dears!

I know you will buy them;

Come to-morrow and try them;

You'll not see their like, folks, in years!

Go put them back careful, Babette!

Wrap them all up in nice cotton, white;

But first let them say

E'er you take them away

To our friends—

DOLLS (*unexpectedly*). "Merry Christmas!
Good-night!"

THE END

The Christmas Picture

As a sort of prologue to this little play, have some one tell the story of Dr. VanDyke's "Other Wise Man," making it brief, simple and impressive, with some sweet Christmas melody coming between it and the play itself.

CHARACTERS

MRS. MORLEY.

ANNE MORLEY, *her daughter.*

PEGGY AND EMILY, *girl friends of ANNE'S.*

NORAH, *the MORLEY maid.*

(All parts may be taken by young girls.)

SCENE.—*Living-room of the MORLEY home; sofa facing audience; table with shaded lamp and books at side; holly decorations. ANNE busy tying up Christmas presents. Time, Christmas Eve.*

ANNE (*with tired happy sigh*). There, that's

the last. (*Places finger on each gift.*) Mother's knitting-bag, and Daddy's slippers,—I do hope they're the right size; and Tom's skates,—if that boy knew how many dishes I've washed and chairs I've dusted, and beds I've made to earn them, he'd appreciate them, I guess! And Grandma's cap,—the dear! I hope she'll like the little rosettes. And this top for Dotty,—the best spinner that babykins ever saw. And Peggy and Emily's books, and Norah's apron. I don't think I've forgotten anybody. My! but Christmas presents are exciting! Just the outside makes you all —— There's the door-bell. (*Calls.*) I'll go, Norah! Oh, all right—tell them to come on in here. Heigho, girls!

(*Two girls enter room.*)

PEGGY. Heigho, Anne! what you doing, tying up presents? I finished mine this afternoon. And the one for—oh! (*claps hand over mouth*) I almost told. I just can't keep any kind of secrets.

EMILY. Isn't it the hardest work? I'm just about bursting with 'em. But say, Anne, what we just came over for is to see if you can go down to the Ainslee Studios with us to see a wonderful picture. Aunt Nell is going to take us,—she has cards of admission. It's by a new artist,—I can't possibly say his name,—it begins with a Z—or maybe it is X.—Well, never mind

(*as they laugh*), what's a name anyhow? Can you go, do you suppose, Anne?

ANNE. Why, I guess so. I'll ask Mother. (*Turns to leave room.*) But what did you say the picture is?

PEGGY (*in awed voice*). It is the Christ-child. Emily's Aunt Nell saw it in New York and she says it is just lovely,—the face so sweet and pure, with eyes that seem to be looking way way down into your heart; and little outstretched hands as if He was asking you to love Him.

EMILY. I heard her say to Mother, "a baby face with all the love and joy and sorrow of the world in it, if you can imagine such a thing." She says it made her sort of sad and joyful at the same time. She wants very much for us girls to see it.

ANNE. And if I couldn't go to-night,—won't there be any other chance?

EMILY. No, for it is only exhibited here this one evening; then it goes to another city. But I'm sure your mother will let you go. We will leave our house at eight. Hurry and ask her.

ANNE (*goes to door*). Mother! Mother! I want to ask you something.

(*Leaves room. Girls take up book from table and look at it together. Look up eagerly as ANNE returns.*)

BOTH. Well?

ANNE. Mother says "Yes, certainly!" she wants me to see such a beautiful picture. Will you wait for me? I can go in a few moments.

EMILY. No, we'll have to go on. I promised Mother to take a basket of Christmas things to our laundress.

PEGGY. And I have to put up some holly and pick over some raisins for Lucy's pudding.

EMILY (*as they rise to go*). But you be sure to be in good time. Come over as soon as you are ready.

(*Good-byes! ANNE sings happy little Christmas tune as she gathers up armful of gifts. You still hear her as she goes out of sight. She returns almost immediately, coat and hat in arms. Lays them on chair.*)

NORAH (*enters excited*). Oh, Miss Anne, darlin', will you go and sit by Dotty a while? She's woke up and wants your Ma, and she's stepped over to Mrs. Taylor's a minute. And I'm just puttin' my pies in the oven, and if she gets wide awake she won't get to sleep again for hours,—and the crust'll get all soggy if I leave 'em. (*Sees coat and hat.*) Oh, was you goin' out?

(ANNE *looks dismayed; hesitates; looks at clock; then says smilingly.*)

ANNE. I can wait a few minutes I guess, and it never would do to spoil your nice Christmas pies.

NORAH. It's the blessed lamb of a child ye are now. And I'll give you the piece with the fattest raisins in it shure, if I can diskiver which is it. And as soon as they're safe in the oven I'll go to the child meself, and sing her a song of the Irish fairies that'll fair tickle the life out o' her. (*Goes out. ANNE also goes out; you hear her voice singing the lullaby "Sleep, Baby, Sleep" over several times. Then NORAH'S voice.*) They're in, Miss Anne. Oh, asleep, is she? Bless the wee thing!

(*ANNE reënters living-room, tiptoeing softly; looks at clock; starts to put on hat.*)

ANNE. I must hurry! I do want so to see that picture of that wonderful baby! Just ordinary babies are so sweet! I could hardly leave Dotty lying there with her old rag doll hugged up to her, and a dimply smile on her face. And this picture of the most wonderful Baby of all—how I shall love it! (*Telephone rings. ANNE answers.*) Yes, Mother, this is Anne. Mrs. Taylor's Ted is sick? Oh, isn't that too bad! You want me to bring over our hot-water bottle and the colic medicine——? Why, I (*looks at clock*)—why, Mother, I'm afraid I'll miss—why, I said—— Oh, never mind. Yes, I'll come right over. Good-bye! (*Aside, dis-*

tressedly.) Mother has forgotten about the picture. (*Half crying.*) Maybe she couldn't have found any other way to get the things and little Ted is such a darling!—I couldn't go on letting him have a pain for want of our hot-water bottle.

(*Hurries into hat and coat.*)

NORAH (*comes in again*). Miss Anna, will you be back here again before you go for good? I've a box I was late gettin' ready, and I'll be so much obliged if you'd drop it at Sister Molly's. I'll have it ready in ten minutes.

ANNE (*looks again at clock anxiously; begins*). Why, I —

NORAH (*not noticing ANNE's distress*). It's for me little nephew Patsey. He's so crazy to go a-skatin' and I been sittin' up nights workin' on a sweater for his Christmas, so he'll be good and warm when he goes—he takes cold that aisy! 'Tis the color of the little imerald isle itself, and will set off his red cheeks like green leaves does an apple.

ANNE. All right, Norah. I'll manage to stop back for it. I have to take our hot-water bottle and colic medicine over to Mother now. Teddy Taylor's got a bad pain.

NORAH. Och! Now ain't that just like him!—to go havin' a pain sich an inconvenient time as Christmas Eve! He's the most unexpected young one. Went and had croup on the

Fourth of July, and the measles the day his aunt was married. And just the other day didn't he go and swallow the very last button his mother was about to sew on his new overcoat—and—— (*Telephone rings; ANNE has gone out while NORAH talks. At 'phone.*) Yes'm,—no'm, no, I'm Norah. Miss Anne's gone on an errand. You're waitin' for her. Well, I guess she'll be there soon. How soon? Well, I'd say fifteen minutes. You'll wait that long? I'll tell her. Thank you. Good-bye! (*Hangs up.*) Now wouldn't it be too bad if they went and left her! I forgot entirely about her going somewhere special. But I'm hopin' she'll get back all in good time. (*Goes about room "tidying up"; 'phone rings again. NORAH at 'phone.*) Yes'm,—no'm, she's not returned. You can't wait? Can't you now? That's too bad. She's just been doin' errands, the dear little soul, for her Ma and Teddy Taylor's stomach-ache, and the pies and the baby,—p'isoned the baby——? Oh, no! (*Laughs heartily.*) It's just my mixed up way of talkin'. Dotty's far from p'isoned. (*Laughs again.*) Tell Miss Anne to get some one to bring her down to the stodio? Ye'll leave word at the door about her? It's open for an hour yet? All right, thank you, Ma'am. I'll give her your message. (*Hangs up. Door-bell rings.*) Well, there's the door-bell. What now? (*Goes out; returns, folded note in hand, which she turns over interestedly.*) Now whatever does the Boss

want of Miss Anne, I'm wonderin'. I hope she won't be hindered no more.

ANNE (*comes in out of breath from hurrying; says*). Where's your box, Norah? Please hurry!

NORAH (*holds out note; says*). Yer father's shovver just left this fer ye; I'm hopin' it ain't to hinder you again. Yer friends 'phoned they've started, but fer you to get some one to bring you down to the Stoodios, and they'd leave word at the door to let you in.

ANNE (*disappointedly*). Oh, dear! I don't see how I'll get there now. But maybe (*hopefully*) Mother will let me go alone this once. It isn't far. (*Opens note, and begins to read aloud slowly, as NORAH goes out.*) "Little Daughter Dear:—Knowing how full Mother's hands are apt to be to-night I am calling on her right-hand, first-aid assistant to help me out on a little Merry Christmas undertaking. I've just discovered that a new man of ours has been having such a bad time, sickness, doctor's bills and house-rent raised—a lot of things like that; and that unless somebody helps out there isn't going to be any Merry Christmas at his house to-morrow, for he couldn't afford any Christmas dinner or tree, nor anything like that. And with three little kiddies around you can imagine things won't be very cheerful that way. So little Pollyanna, brighten-the-corner-where-you-are of mine (*ANNE laughs*), I want you to get a basket and then tell

Norah you please want that chicken-for-salad she has cooked. I'll buy her another at the delicatessen's on my way home, and a bunch of celery, one of her cranberry jellies; a loaf of bread; some butter; a pie; and oh, just anything you can wheedle out of Norah and Mother; and you pack them carefully into that basket, and James will stop with the car in an hour or so, and we'll send a bit of Merry Christmas down to a little house on Logan Street. Good-bye, thank you, Dad." (*Slowly; brushes aside a tear.*) Of course I can't refuse Daddy,—not even if I was selfish enough not to want to help make that family happy. But I guess I'll miss—well, I just mustn't think about it. I'll go right down and get Norah to help me pack that basket. (*Goes out.*)

(*A moment elapses, then a lady enters the room. She removes her wraps.*)

MRS. MORLEY. I wonder where my little Anne is. Oh, I had forgotten, she was going to see that beautiful picture at the Ainslee Studios. I do hope I didn't make her late. I couldn't think of anything but poor little suffering Ted. (*Listens.*) Why, I hear her now talking to Norah,—she's back soon. I must run in now and see if my baby is sleeping well. (*Goes out.*)

(*ANNE slowly reënters. Sits down on sofa, hands clasped in lap. Looks very disappointed and sad.*)

ANNE. It's too late to go now,—and I've missed seeing the Christ-child,—the beautiful Christ-child.

(MRS. MORLEY *reënters room; sits down beside ANNE; puts arm about her.*)

MRS. MORLEY. Little daughter dear, Mother's so sorry about your disappointment. If I had only remembered! But Teddy was so sick for a while, I didn't think of anything else. And Norah has been telling me about all the other things.

(ANNE *smiles bravely, swallowing the lump in her throat.*)

ANNE. But Teddy is better, isn't he, Mother? That's the most important thing.

MRS. MORLEY. Yes, he is fine now. I think he'll be able to eat his Christmas dinner and have another pain by to-morrow night. (*Laughing.*) But (*soberly*) he was a very sick little boy for a while. Doctor said our hot-water bottle and the colic medicine undoubtedly saved him a severe illness.

ANNE. Well, the basket is all packed for Papa's man and his family; and I took Norah's Patsey's sweater around; and Dotty's sound asleep; and Norah's pies saved, and—and—maybe there'll be another beautiful picture some day. (*Swallows again.*)

(MRS. MORLEY *takes ANNE's hands into hers.*)

MRS. MORLEY. I've just been reminded, dear, of something I read the other day. Did you ever hear the story of The Other Wise Man?

ANNE (*thinks a moment; then says*). Why, yes, Mother, it was a beautiful story, of the Wise Man who expected to join his three friends and take his gifts of wonderful jewels to the Christ-child king; and so many things happened to delay him; the sick man; and the little baby he saved from Herod's soldiers; and the slave-girl he ransomed. He gave up all his gifts for them and didn't get to the baby Christ. And then years and years after he started to find Him, when the poor wise man was old and white-haired and hurt and dying he does find the King at last.

MRS. MORLEY. And do you remember the sweet words that rewarded him for all he had done and given up?

ANNE. Yes I do, Mother, for they made me glad again after I had been feeling so terribly sorry for the poor Wise Man. (*Repeats them slowly and reverently.*) "Verily I say unto thee, Inasmuch as thou hast done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, thou hast done it unto me."

MRS. MORLEY (*gently*). Can you guess why I have been reminded of the Other Wise Man to-night?

(*Goes out smiling, as ANNE slowly shakes her head, puzzled.*)

ANNE. I do wonder what Mother meant? Could it be that Teddy, and Norah's Patsey, and Daddy's folks are "the least of these" too! (*Clasps her hands joyfully.*) Oh, I'm glad, glad, glad, that I had a chance to be a little bit like The Other Wise Man!

CURTAIN

CHRISTMAS RECITATIONS

Christmas Recitations

A GREETING

For very small child.

To all the folks on this side (*bows to right*)
I'll say a word or two.
And then I'll talk to this side, (*bows to left*)
Please wait until I'm through.

Merry Christmas, you folks! (*To right.*)
And Merry Christmas, you! (*To left.*)
And if I've left out any one
Here's Merry Christmas, too. (*Bows to center.*)

TELL SANTY

Tiny girl, carrying little white stocking with pink heel and toe.

If you should see Santy,
Please tell him for me,
To put on his specs,
So he'll be sure to see
Among all our stockings
That's hung in a row,
This wee little white one
With a pink heel and toe.

SING A SONG O' SIXPENCE

For a small boy.

Sing a song o' sixpence,
A pocket full of money,
(*Jingles coin in left-hand pocket.*)
When you go buying Christmas gifts;
But doesn't it seem funny?—

You buy one here, you buy one there,
As with the crowd you mingle.
And when you start for home again
There's not enough to jingle.

(*Turns right-hand pocket inside out; produces one penny.*)

CHRISTMAS HOPES

For very little boy and girl.

GIRL.

I'd like to have a dolly,
And a striped top to spin;
A picture book that has a lot
Of little kitties in;
I'd like to have a dishes set,
To play wiv Jane and Molly;
And candy too,—but (*wishfully*) most of all
I hope I get that dolly.

Boy.

I'd like to have a pair of skates;
And train of cars that run;
A football, and an Injun suit;
And war-boat with a gun;
I hope I get a printing-press
To write down names and dates;
I hope I get a lot of things,—
But gee! I want them skates!

BOY WANTED

If Santa Claus should put a sign
Out some place where I'd see it,—
"Boy Wanted!" well I'd go in quick
And tell him I would be it.

I'd help him in his candy shop,
And I'd take lots of pains
To paint the stripes real neatly
On all the candy canes.

And maybe if he 'dropped one
And broke it, he would say:
"Here, this is spoiled,—don't leave it
Lying 'round, Boy, in the way!"

WONDERINGS

We'd hunged up our stockings, and hopped in
our beds;
And the most lot of wonderings popped in our
heads.

And I says to Jimmie,
And he says to me:
"How Santy Claus gets in is what I don't see!"

For our chimney's so little, and he is so fat!
And we kept on a-wondering just like that.

And I says to Jimmie,
And he says to me:
"If-I-was-n't-so-o-o-sleep-y-I'd-wait-up-and-and-
see—"

And then,—it's so funny,—the next thing we
knew

Mother called: "Merry Christmas!" and the
night was all through.

And I says to Jimmie,
And he says to me:
"Oh Boy! Say look! Santy done it you see!"

SECRETS

Secrets in the closets;
Tired of hiding there;
Secrets in the bureau drawers;
Secrets in the air.

Secrets in our eyes,
And playing hide and seek
Round the corners of our mouths;
So very hard to keep.

We're just bubbling over
Each minute of the day.
If Christmas doesn't come soon
We know they'll get away.

NOT LIKE JACK

If I had been Jack Horner,
And owned a Christmas pie,
I'd say: "Come on and have some!"
To be polite I'd try.

I wouldn't pull the plums out
The way Jack did, for he
Must have mislaid his manners,
As you can plainly see.

A WARNING

A little gray mouse
Does harm in a house;
And I know it was right for Mother
To set a steel trap
That works with a snap;
But it worried me,—somehow or other,—

To see it to-night,
Set to catch him, just right;
All baited with cheese nice and yellow;
For I hate to deceive
The poor mouse Christmas Eve;
So I'll warn off the little gray fellow.

When the smart little chap
Smells the cheese in that trap,
He will see the sign I've put upon it;—
“Keep off! Danger here!”
And beside it,—right near
Is a cake with some pink icing on it.

And I'm certain if mice
Really know what is nice,—
Even if he can't read the sign;—
He'd rather have cake;
And won't bother to take
The cheese;—and he'll get away fine.

A CITY TREE

My father likes the country,
 'Cause the trees are all so grand.
He says the city's nothing
 But things made by man's hand.
He says the apple trees in Spring
 Are glorious to see;
And all the other trees in bloom
 Are lovely as can be.

The willow trees beside the brook;
 And nut trees on the hill;
And grand old pine trees in the woods,
 So straight and tall and still
My father loves; and 'course he's right;
 The country trees are fine;
The apple trees, and cherry trees;
 And tall and stately pine.

But there's one city tree, I know
 That country trees can't beat;
A shining, spangled Christmas tree
 Just full of things to eat!

THE OLD WOMAN PICKING HER GEESE

“The old woman’s picking her geese to-day,”
Said Grandma, but all I could see
Were just little snowflakes come fluttering down
In front of the old pine tree.

“But where are the geese?—and Grandma,
The old woman,—where is she?”
“Well, it looks very much as if she’s perched
On a branch of the old pine tree.”

And I looked, and I looked,—but nowhere
That old woman could I see.
Just little white fluttering flakes of snow
In front of the old pine tree.

Then I noticed a twinkle in Grandma’s eyes;
And quickly I said: “I see;
But the feathers look *quite* like snowflakes
In front of the old pine tree.”

A SUSPECT

Our postman is the nicest man!
He comes most every day.
And I go flying to the door
Before he gets away.

He brings me lots of valentines,
And picture post-cards too;
He's always bringing things to folks;
He never does get through.

And Christmas time his big brown bag
Is full as it can hold;
He doesn't seem to mind a bit,
Although the days are cold.

His cheeks are pink; his eyes are bright;
He's nice and fat and jolly;
And in his buttonhole to-day
He wore a sprig of holly.

I tell you who I think he is!
I'm mostly sure, because
He acts 'xactly just the same!
I think he's Santa Claus!

SANTA'S HIRED MAN

I thought the other day I'd made
A big dis-cov-ery;
I'd wondered such a long time
Just who Santa Claus might be.

And our postman brings nice things
To all the folks around;
So I just thought I'd ask him
The first good chance I found,

To-day I met him at the door
And said, "Please tell me true,—
I want to know so very much
If Santa Claus is you."

His eyes looked down at me so kind,
"Now bless your little heart!
You came so near to guessing it,
I think you're very smart!

"And so I'll try to answer
As truly as I can.
I'm not old Santa Claus himself,
I'm just his hired man.

"But if you've got a kiss to send
To Santa, little miss,
I'd like to take it right along!"
Well, 'course I sent that kiss.

A TWISTED TONGUE

Recitation for a little person who talks "crooked."

I spoke a piece on Christmas Day,
The very best I could;
And everybody clapped their hands,
And said I spoke it good.

But just the same they laughed a lot,
As if that piece was fun;
My aunt said that she guessed 'twas cause
I've such a twisted tongue.

I took my tongue right by the end,
And held it good and tight;
And twisted it around and 'round,
And tried to get it right.

And then I tried to speak that piece;
But 't isn't cured I guess,—
Because I get stuck just the same
With that old letter "s."

I told my mother how I'd tried,
And asked if I must wait
A very long time did she s'pose
To get my tongue out straight.

And she just hugged me in her arms,
When she heard what I'd done;
And said she didn't care how long
The twist stayed in my tongue.

BACKWARDS WORDS

I know a little brown-eyed girl;
And you would laugh to hear
Her get her words turned "hind side fore,"
They sound so very queer.

Once she came running in the house
Excited as could be;
"Mother! A little hopper-grass
Jumped wight up onto me!"

"I've borrowed Charleses' barrow-wheel,"
I heard her say one day;
"It makes a lovely wagon and
I'm carting loads of hay."

She says that she likes "veg'tables,
Tatoes" and all the rest;
"Peas and beans and 'sparagus;"
But she likes "upturns" best.

And how her eyes do sparkle
When she sees her special treat,
A big ripe "melon-water;"
"That's what I like to eat!"

But just the funniest of all
Was when she said to me,
"I hope I get some poppy-lolls
Upon my Christmas tree."

A CHRISTMAS SOCK

As Christmas Eve was drawing near,
I thought: "I'll fix a plan.
I'll hang up just as long and wide
A stocking as I can."

I thought of all the fat folks,
Every single one I knew;
But couldn't find a one I thought
Would just exactly do.

Till Tom, the coal-man, came along.
My! But he's high and wide!
So when he finishd shoveling coal
I took him to one side.

And 'xplained about my plan, and he
He laughed and said: "All right,
I'll bring along a good big sock
As I go by to-night."

And so when Christmas Eve came 'round
And bedtime came, I said:
"I'll hang mine up there by and by."
And the others went to bed.

So soon's 'twas quiet I sneaked down
And hung that sock up too.
It did look funny hanging there!
It was a Killy-Loo!

'Twould hold a pint of peanuts
And the biggest orange that grows,
I really think; and candies, my!
It surely was *some* hose!

Wouldn't the others' eyes pop out
When they came down for theirs,
And saw my big fat sock! I chuckled
All the way up-stairs.

Well, Christmas morning came and I
Woke up the first, and crept
Down-stairs, while all the rest the house
All unsuspecting slept.

I couldn't wait to see that sock;
I was so very eager;
The more I 'maged how it looked
It kept on looking bigger.

Well—when I saw them in a row,
The rest were fat and lumpy,
But that sock looked so limp 'twas only
Just a little humpy.

And when I took it down it didn't
Have but one thing in it.
A bottle 'sides a little note,—
I hurried to unpin it.

“Dear Jack—” it said, “I never saw
A change quite so stupendous,
As how your foot has grown since last year;
It must be tremendous.

“I really can't think of a thing
A boy the size of that
Would need quite so much as a bottle
Full of Anti-Fat.

“Sincerely, Santa Claus.”—I guess—
I'm really 'fraid if I
Had been a girl—I really am
Afraid I'd had to cry.

Just then I saw a stocking
Hanging there that looked like mine,
And s'prised, I took a paper off,
And read another line:—

“And Jack, when you thin down again
The size a boy should be,
Just help yourself to all these things
You in this stocking see.”

The Anti-Fat's out in the snow;
The big sock's out of sight.
And I'm through fooling Santa Claus,
It doesn't seem just right.

A KISS FOR THE PRETTIEST GIRL

Grandpa's a tease; so when Mary Louise
And Jinny and me and Rose
Noticed him under the mistletoe
We whispered: “Now what do you s'pose

Grandpa is up to?” And by and by
He saw us watching; “Hello!
I'm waiting to kiss the prettiest girl.
Who? Now wouldn't you like to know?”

Jinnie has eyes bright as stars in the skies;
And Rose has golden curls;
And Mary Louise has both of these
And teeth that glisten like pearls.

And Grandma praises my rosy cheeks
And says I've a winning smile.
How excited we grew as we wondered just who
Grandpa had in his mind all the while.

"Most likely it's Rose, for she has the best nose."
Or "Mary Louise is the fairest."
Then somebody said though my hair's rather red
That shade is considered the rarest.

Grandma heard, sitting near, she was laughing,
the dear!

And her cheeks were the sweetest pale pink.
And her eyes kind and bright, neath her hair
silvery white;

"You will make them vain, Grandpa, *I* think."

"You go first," whispered Rose. "It's a joke
I suppose;

But we'll try just to see what he'll do."
Jinnie urged Lou and she said she'd try after
me.

So we kept it up,—“You go!” “No, you!”

Just then Cousin John called: "Oh, Grandma,
come on

And see who this is in a sleigh."

Of course Grandma rose; and over she goes,
Passing Grandpa right close on the way.

But she didn't get by; for he laughed out: "Oh,
my!

Was there ever such luck as this?

The prettiest girl walks right into my arms."

And he gave her a sounding kiss.

GOBBLE GOBBLE GOO!

While Grandpa in vacation time
Was showing Teddy 'round
The old farm, that each visit
Seemed in new things to abound;

A little lonely speckled thing
Came suddenly in view,
And greeted them in cheerful notes
With, "Gobble gobble goo!"

"That one's the only turkey left
Of them hatched out last May,"
Said Grandpa, "Reckon he'll stay 'round
Till long 'bout Christmas Day.

"I notice he's a pickin' up
As if he knows his fate,
And calculates to do his share
Towards fillin' up the plate."

As days went by and Teddy's stay
Was coming to an end,
Of things he hated most to leave
Was one small speckled friend,

That ever since the morning
It first strutted into view
Had never failed to greet him
With its "Gobble gobble goo!"

Soon back again in town and school,
The old farm fell behind
In memory, till Christmas neared,
And brought it back to mind.

"Now Pa will pick his turkey out,"
Ted's mother said, and quick
The thought flew into Teddy's mind:
"There's only one to pick."

And that's the reason Grandpa got
A note the following day,
That made him laugh, while Grandma
Slyly wiped a tear away.

“ Dere Grandpa,—Please if you don’t kare
And Grandma’d just as soon,
I wish you’d have a chickken
Stead of turkkey Christmas noon.

“ I know it’s ‘dredful fullish,
But I don’t think I cud chew
A mouthful of that turkkey
That said: ‘ Gobble gobble goo!’ ”

And so, when Christmas Day came ’round,
And dinner claimed a place,
His grandpa said, half jestingly:
“ Come Teddy, you say grace.”

And somehow, though a smile went round,
No other grace was said,
But Teddy’s “ thanks,” as reverently
He bowed his curly head.

“ Dear God, we thank you very much
For all these things to eat;
But most of all I’m glad that we’ve
Got chicken for a treat.”

Just then upon the windōw sill
A speckled turkey flew;
And gravely added his “ Amen.”
’Twas “ Gobble gobble goo!”

KEEP THE POT A-BOILING

I was all done buying presents;
Books for Mother and Lou;
Neckties for Bud and Father;
Bet I was glad I was through!
Got the last thing this afternoon,
And had just a quarter to spare;
And then's when I sniffed that taffy place,
And just nacherly aimed for there.

Taffy! Um-m-m-m! but it did smell good:
You could smell it way down the street!
Thought to myself: "Here's where I have
One good old-fashioned eat!"
Just then I heard a "Ting-aling-ling!"
When my mouth was just a-spoilin'
For sweets,—that Salvation girl sings out:
"Keep the pot a-boilin'!"

She stood on the corner just between
Me and the candy store.
If only she'd waited another day!
It made me feel kinda sore.
Seem's if she's lookin' straight at me;
And her tongue didn't need no oilin',
Seem's that them words just cut the air:
"Keep the pot a-boilin'!"

Then I happened to think I could go around
The block, and not go near her;
And I did, but when I got to the store
I just couldn't help but hear her
Callin' and beatin' her tambourine;
Doin' some extra toilin'
To put my ear drums out of shape:
"Keep the pot a-boilin'!"

"For the poor children's Christmas treat," she
says.

That taffy seemed to beckon.
'Twas runnin' competition with
That Salvation girl, I reckon.
But somehow my feet wouldn't take me in;
They sorta seemed recoilin',
And takin' me towards her instead:
"Keep the pot a-boilin'!"

Well!—I tried to sneak that quarter in
So's not to make a jingle.
You feel so kind of showin' off,
Or actin' like Kris Kringle!
But—Plump! it went, and she looked round;
And my fun wasn't quite all spoilin',
For she says, smilin' straight at me:
"Keep the pot a-boilin'!"

WHY I LIKE SUNDAY SCHOOL

Do I like Sunday School? Oh, yes,
Much as any boy I guess.
Kind of hate to brush my hair,
And scrub so much just to go there;
And black my shoes, and wear a hat,
And necktie;—but outside of that
It's not so bad,—I'm getting so
I b'lieve I kind of like to go.

The teacher's nice, and tells us things
'Bout shepherd boys that turns to kings,
And all like that; and by and by
When Sunday School is over I—
I stick around, and wait to see
If the minister'll notice me;
And when he comes along I slide
And edge in somehow by his side.

He's wide around, and way up high,
And when I'm standing by him,—why
My brother Bill he says that we
Are Mutt and Jeff, and Mother—she
Says: "William, if I ever hear
That you've said that when the minister's
near,—
Such disrespect! and you *my* son,—
Well—you'll be sorry when I'm done."

Our minister'll pat my head and say:
" Well, and how's the boy to-day? "
He don't always know my name,
But he knows *me* just the same.
Sometimes " Jack " and sometimes " Jim,"
But I don't mind as long's it's him.
For he's mostly sure to say:
" And how's that dog of yours to-day? "

And it's just as plain's can be
When he says that that he knows *me*.
For when he comes to call on us
My dog Joffre he makes a fuss;
Wags his tail, and scampers 'round
Glad as anything, that hound.
And then our minister'll say:
" And how's the General to-day? "

And then Joffre he gets so wild,
Ma says: " Put that dog out, child! "
But he'll be a-hangin' 'bout
When our minister goes out.
And he'll wag his tail till he
Pats his head like he pats *me*.
And that dog's liking's proof enough
That our minister's the right stuff.

A CHRISTMAS FOR LONESOME FOLKS

I don't s'pose I'd ever have found her
If I hadn't picked up the wrong hat
The day I stopped in at the liberry,—
The whole thing started with that.

It was just a few days before Christmas;
And snow was a falling and sleet;
So a feller needed to wrap up warm
From his head clean down to his feet.

I was nosin' around the liberry,—
It's warm and pleasant and bright,—
I spend the most of my "off" hours there,
And it keeps me cheered up a sight.

For a roomin' house gets kinda dreary,
And an old feller gets kinda blue,
And missin' the home that he used to have,
And—well, mopin' around won't do.

Well, browsin' among the bookstacks,
I laid my hat down and so
I clean forgot that I had a hat
Till I noticed 'twas time to go.

Mine wasn't right where I'd laid it,
But just a step off on a chair
Was one that looked so much like it
I s'posed I had left it there.

Well,—I went on down the stairway,
Till I got to the door, and that
Reminded me it was winter outside,
And so—I put on my hat!

The janitor he stood near me
When I put on that hat, and well,—
It set on the top of my head about
Like a good-sized peanut shell!

I looked at him as I took it off;
And then we both stood and laughed!—
“I sh’d say, Mistah Brown, that your hat’s done
shrunk
A settin’ aroun’ in the draft.”

Well, of course I seen in a minute,
“There’s been a mistake it ’pears;
But I’d a thought my hat would ’ve slid
Clean over the feller’s ears.”

There was nothin’ to do but go out in the cold
A wearin’ that peanut shell;
But my feelin’s didn’t improve as I went
It’s hardly needful to tell.

Pushin’ chairs on the Boardwalk
Is chilly enough at the best.
So I was glad to get back to my room,
And haul a cap out of my chest.

The next day I stopped in the liberry,
The janitor met me and says:
“The fellow was in that got yo’ hat
An’ he left you his address.”

“Antonio Barratti,—
A plague-nation dago!” says I,
A wonder he wouldn’t ’ve left the hat
When he was a-passin’ by.”

Well!—gettin’ along towards evenin’
I started to find the place
Where Tony Barratt and me old friend hat
Was livin’ nowadays.

In a little side street I found ’em,
In some rooms on an upper floor
Of an old frame house,—but a nice clean place;
And I met the chap at the door.

He knew as soon as he seen me
What I wanted, and says, says he:
“You coma to getta tha hat my frien’?
Well, mos’ surely it don’ fitta me.”

Do you know, as soon as I seen him
I felt a kind o’ disgrace
That I’d called him a “plague-nation dago,”
For the chap had a splendid face.

He was slim and dark, with shinin' eyes,
And a mouth just cut out to smile.
And he made me a bow at the door that I 'low
Made just "Howdy-do!" worth while.

"Too bad I give you the trouble, sir,
I make a mistake, you see;
I guess my head it get los' in a book
Down there in the liberry.

"I worka you see in tha beeg hotel,
I maka tha engine go.
But when I have time I like to see
What is good in tha books, you know.

"And that day I forget it is getting late
Till I look at my watch which say
I spenda much time and I queeck mus' go;
An' so I hurry away.

"I picka tha hat up offa tha shelf,
An' go like I beata tha ban'.
For I think I will sure be late an' I know
Tha manager he won' stan'.

"An' outa tha door like a streaka tha light
With tha hat in ma han' you see;
For (laughing, he touched his thick curly hair),
It's not so much need on me.

“An’ I get almos’ to tha hotel when
I guess what the people think
Tha col’ winter night with my hat in ma han’
They guess I have taka tha drink.

“Well, Mister, you see how it don’ fitta me,
I look like I have an eclipse.”
Well,—we laughed and we laughed while his
white teeth shone
Between his red parted lips.

Then he had to go to his work and so
He sent me on up the stair;
“My little Toinette she will give it to you;
You knock on tha firs’ door there.”

I knocked at the door, and a voice said: “Come.”
I opened it to see
A little girl with a picture face
In a wheel chair facing me.

Her big dark eyes laughed up at me,
From a little pale oval face.
And her red lips smiled as her father’s had;
She seemed to brighten the place.

“You came for your hat I guess; didn’t you, sir?
I scolded my papa for he
Forgets just everything but books
When he goes to the liberry.

“ But we’ve taken the very best care of it,—”
On the table beside where she sat
Was something wrapped up in a satin scarf:—
And I’m blest if it wasn’t my hat.

“ And won’t you sit down ! ” she says, polite ;
And I did, for I wanted to stay
In the room awhile with that sunny smile ;
It lit up the dull winter day.

And just in a minute we two was friends,
Like we’d known each other for years ;
I guess she was glad of company too ;
For there’s only them two, it appears.

And we talked of this, and we talked of that,
And how she had got the fall
That had hurt her back,—“ But Mister, I—
I wouldn’t mind at all

“ If it wasn’t that Christmas is coming soon,
And I can’t for the life of me see
How I’m going to plan for my lonesome folks,
And trim their Christmas tree.

“ There’s the newsboy who lives on the floor be-
low,
And his old, old bent grandmother ;
And lame Miss Clay who sews every day,
And hasn’t a sister nor brother.

“ And the poor little girl who lives next door,
And her papa,—because you see
Their mamma just died,—and I ’member so well
When that happened to Papa and me.—

“ My papa’s so good, I know he would
Just manage it all some way
If he knew what I wanted to do, but he
Is so busy and tired every day,

“ That I don’t want to ask him to trim a tree,
And fix up our rooms,—but oh!
I just keep hoping there’ll be a way,
And thinking out things, you know.

“ Look!” she opened a box within reach of her
hand;
Her little face all alight.
It was full of paper flowers made
Of every color that’s bright.

“ Can’t you just see how they’ll look on a tree?”
“ I sh’d say I can!” says I,
“ You’d think you’s turned loose in a flower bed
Along in June or July.”

“ And I made this pin-cushion to s’prise Miss
Clay,
And this apron for Dick’s grandmother;
And I’m dressing my dolly for little Nell;—
Sometime I may have another.

“ But I want to knit a muffler for Dick,
And one for Nell’s father, but how
To get the wool without bothering
My papa’s what worries me now.”

Well, all in a flash it come to me;—
“ See here, why won’t I do
To help fix things for your lonesome folks,
And do them errands for you? ”

Well! I told you her smile lit up that room
Before;—but bells was ringin’,
And flowers bloomin’, and little birds
Just bu’stin’ their throats a-singin’

After I’d said them words;—for she
Just bubbled over with joy;—
And I seemed to catch the disease myself,
Till I felt like a frisky boy!

Well,—the long and short of it is that now
Little Toinette and me
Spend every minute we can on plans
For her lonesome folk’s Christmas tree.

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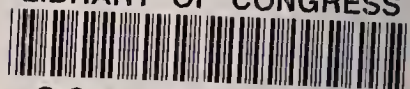
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